

## The Virginia Regional Environmental Management System (V-REMS) FY2006 Annual Report

### 2006 Highlights

- ✓ Welcomed 10 new V-REMS partners
- ✓ Stood up four issue-focused workgroups
- ✓ Awarded \$274,000 from EPA to retrofit diesel school buses in Richmond and Hopewell
- ✓ Awarded \$284,000 from DOE to finance the construction of 12 E-85 fueling stations
- ✓ Realized \$472,701 in cost savings through energy efficiency programs
- ✓ Eight V-REMS partners received Chesapeake Business for The Bay Excellence Awards
- ✓ Increased standing of seven partners in the VA DEQ's Environmental Excellence Programs (E2, E3, E4)
- ✓ DSCR recognized as a winner of the White House Closing the Circle Award for its leadership of V-REMS

### Background

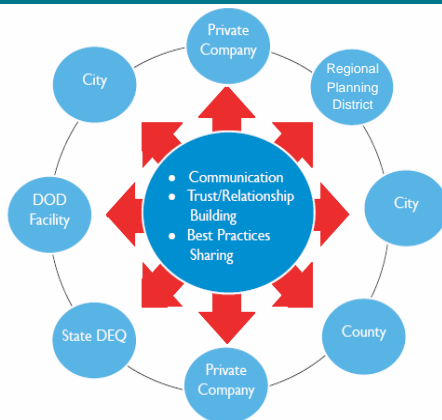
The Virginia Regional Environmental Management System (V-REMS) includes over 40 federal, state, and local public and private organizations that collaborate to address community and environmental issues through an innovative partnership approach.

### Sponsors

- Originally sponsored by the Department of Defense and the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) in 2003 as a pilot program to develop an EMS-based regional approach to environmental and community challenges.
- The V-REMS Partnership's success has led to continuing support by the Defense Supply Center Richmond (DSCR). The DSCR finds value in V-REMS because it enhances the facility's mission readiness, promotes sustainability, and provides significant benefits to its local community.

### V-REMS Partnership Mission

1. Collaborate to address local and regional environmental priorities;
2. Improve communication and trust between partners and the community;
3. Leverage environmental experiences, best practices, lessons learned, and materials; and,
4. Help each partner cost-effectively manage their environmental impacts.



### How V-REMS Works

The V-REMS partnership relies on regular communication between its partners to successfully achieve its partnership mission:

- monthly phone calls
- 2-3 meetings annually
- an intranet site to share data
- workgroup calls and meetings to focus on specific initiatives

### Why V-REMS Works

The V-REMS partnership is often asked why it is succeeding. Informal partner feedback suggests the top ten keys to V-REMS' success are:

1. Focusing partners around the common goals of improving the regional environment and each partner's respective individual strategic goals.
2. Emphasizing trust-building across partners.
3. Including state and Federal regulatory agency participation and endorsement.
4. Relying on an informal participation process where partners participate as their resources allow.
5. Promoting creative and innovative voluntary approaches to environmental challenges.
6. Building a solid business case for partners on their own environmental initiatives.
7. Allowing participants to take leadership roles and champion important initiatives.
8. Providing partners with an opportunity to show and be credited for their environmental work.
9. Measuring and tracking the Partnership's progress in improving the regional environment.
10. Using facilitation support and the facilitator as a neutral partner.



V-REMS partners at the September 12, 2006 V-REMS meeting held at Fort Lee.

### **V-REMS' Level of Activity**

- ✓ 8 all-participants conference calls
- ✓ 2 face-to-face meetings
- ✓ 15+ workgroup calls and meetings
- ✓ 4 grant proposals developed collaboratively
- ✓ 5 outreach presentations
- ✓ 1 "V-REMS Benefits" one-pager developed and distributed
- ✓ 4 "Highlights" fact sheets on the achievements of V-REMS Workgroups
- ✓ Launched Environmental Information Updates to share best practices, funding opportunities, and other environmental information – three Updates distributed
- ✓ Utilized PeerCenter tool to post/answer questions on topics ranging from the proper disposal of jet fuel to EMS logistics, etc. – 12 questions answered
- ✓ Created environmental initiatives library – individual and collaborative efforts



V-REMS school bus retrofits lead to cleaner air for 20,000 children.

### **Accomplishments in 2006**

Through the Partnership's regular avenues of communication, partners were able to identify opportunities for collaboration that aligned with their own key priorities, discuss ongoing V-REMS environmental initiatives and new collaborative opportunities, and form workgroups to manage both individual and joint environmental responsibilities. Throughout the year, V-REMS partners shared information and collaborated on key issues that included, but were not limited to:

energy efficiency ~ E-85 ~ diesel school bus retrofits ~ green buildings ~ air quality ~ the Green Highways Partnership ~ commuting initiatives ~ solid waste management ~ BRAC growth ~ waste minimization ~ watershed protection and stormwater management ~ environmental performance metrics

### ***V-REMS Workgroups – Showing Results in 2006***

On those key issues where V-REMS partners discovered common interests and opportunities for collaborative projects, partners formed workgroups. From these workgroups, the V-REMS Partnership has leveraged resources and achieved a wide range of environmental successes. As these workgroups mature, their focus shifts toward developing meaningful ways to measure environmental performance as well as capitalizing on cost-saving strategies for environmental improvements.

#### **Diesel School Bus Retrofits Workgroup**

- *Accomplishment:* The retrofitting of 197 school buses in Richmond and Hopewell cities funded by a \$274,000 EPA award and \$14,000 contribution from the Virginia DEQ. These retrofits will lead to cleaner air for over 20,000 children.

#### **E-85 Fueling Stations Workgroup**

- *Accomplishment:* The award of \$284,000 from the DOE to finance the construction of 12 E-85 fueling stations. V-REMS partners will leverage their own resources to contribute over \$1 million more to the project through cash and in-kind resources.

#### **Pollution-Absorbing Concrete Workgroup**

- *Accomplishment:* Developed a concept to test the effectiveness of a NOx-absorbing concrete at one of the partner's sites. Submitted a proposal to the DoD/DOE/EPA Environmental Security Technology Certification Program. The Partnership is exploring a range of potential funding sources for the project.

#### **Solid Waste Management Workgroup**

- *Accomplishment:* Developed a concept and proposal for how a company could increase composting at a number of its sites and collaborate with other local organizations in its composting program. The proposed project has the potential to divert large quantities of organic waste from landfills. The Partnership is exploring potential funding sources for the project.

#### **Energy Efficiency Workgroup**

- *Accomplishment:* Information exchange from workgroup interactions led to the replication of a number of energy efficiency projects among V-REMS partners. The success of one V-REMS partner's lighting efficiency initiative inspired a number of other partners to pursue similar initiatives. So far these initiatives have led to \$472,701 in cost savings and significant emissions reductions.

#### **Stormwater Workgroup**

- *Accomplishment:* One V-REMS partner learned about the use of rain gardens and bio-retention ponds from another partner and in turn built eight rain gardens at their own facility. The V-REMS Partnership exchanged information about stormwater issues and Best Management Practices in 2006 and plans to work more on this key issue in 2007.



Mike Murphy, Director of Division of Environmental Enhancement, Virginia DEQ, speaks at the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) June meeting about V-REMS.

*"Over the past three years, the V-REMS partnership has allowed the DSCR to improve our relationship with local communities, support the Commonwealth's environmental goals and help the installation improve environmental performance. In these three ways, V-REMS significantly supports our Mission Readiness and demonstrates our environmental leadership in the community. DSCR is pleased to be able to continue supporting the partnership and Virginia for the future."*

Jim Bailey, Deputy Commander, DSCR

## Outreach Efforts

In 2006, the V-REMS partnership worked to increase the visibility, demonstrate the success, and facilitate opportunities for the replication of the V-REMS model in other parts of the country and across the DoD. Outreach efforts included meetings, fact sheets, and presentations.

### Workgroup Highlights Fact Sheets

The partnership developed the four enclosed fact sheets to profile the workgroups' collaborative accomplishments and the individual successes of V-REMS' partners. The highlights cover the following.

- E-85 Project
- Diesel School Bus Retrofit Project
- Energy Efficiency Project
- Stormwater Activities

The performance metrics' section of each fact sheet serves as a baseline for the partnership's initial efforts to quantify its environmental and economic benefits.

### Targeted Presentations

Several outreach presentations were made by V-REMS partners at the following venues:

- Environmental Council of States (ECOS) subcommittee on "DoD Compatible Use Sustainability" – briefed multiple times throughout FY06, engaging state environmental commissioners and DoD stakeholders.
- EPA headquarters (Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation, Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response, Office of Air and Radiation, Office of Prevention Pesticides and Toxic Substances, Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance) – discussed V-REMS' elements and successes in continuing to add value to the partners, community, and regional environment.
- Joint Services Environmental Management and Geospatial Information & Services Conference – presented on the success of using an Environmental Management System as a framework to construct an effective partnership initiative.

## Outreach Outcomes

### Replication:

- Fortune 100 companies, in at least two different states, are developing REMS partnerships modeled after the V-REMS approach.
- Parties from several state regulatory agencies have demonstrated interest in replicating the V-REMS partnership.

### Support/Recognition:

- Recognition by ECOS, through the DOD Sustainability Workgroup as an innovative model to address regional environmental challenges and to achieve sustainability. ECOS regularly tracks the V-REMS approach and evaluates its progress as a model of sustainability.
- Enthusiastic response from the EPA about the successes that V-REMS has achieved and will help the partnership spread the news of its success at other EPA forums.
- Strategic outreach led to 10 new members joining V-REMS in 2006, expanding the membership to 40 partners.



V-REMS partners survey a Fort Lee landfill-cap project that aims to protect water quality.

## V-REMS Into FY2007

In 2007, the V-REMS Partnership plans include:



The E-85 workgroup will continue to be an important part of V-REMS in 2007.

*"By bringing together public and private organizations to improve the regional environmental conditions beyond regulatory requirements, the V-REMS Partnership advances DEQ's goal of creating a cleaner environment in Virginia. We see V-REMS as an invaluable member of the environmental community in Virginia."*

Mike Murphy, Virginia DEQ

### Targeted Environmental Initiatives by Workgroups

**Goal:** The partnership will build on the successes of its workgroups by continuing to generate meaningful improvements to the regional environment. An increase in the quantity of workgroup calls and meetings will facilitate more detailed discussions regarding collaborative projects, provide the opportunity to invite new participants to join each workgroup's efforts, and hear from outside experts on each workgroup's focus topic. The partnership will utilize the workgroups to react to the wide array of partners' environmental interests while also helping the Partnership achieve tangible environmental results.

**Outcome:** An expansion of existing workgroups and a number of new workgroups that focus on priority issues identified by the partners. In particular, an increased alignment of workgroups with Virginia's environmental priorities (as identified by VA DEQ). The actualization of appropriate and quantifiable environmental performance metrics. Workgroups in 2007 may include:

#### Existing Workgroups:

- E-85 Fueling Stations
- Pollution-Absorbing Concrete
- Diesel Retrofits
- Energy Efficiency
- Stormwater

#### Potential New Workgroups:

- Land Conservation
- Green Buildings
- Green Highways Partnership
- Waste Minimization
- Nutrients in James River Basin

### Strategic V-REMS Outreach to New Partners

**Goal:** The partnership will emphasize strategically expanding V-REMS membership in the Richmond area and across Virginia. The partnership will rely largely on the suggestions of current participants about the most appropriate public and private sector organizations to participate in V-REMS. The partnership will utilize its workgroups as the initial avenue to introduce new partners to V-REMS. This way, new participants will become engaged in one of V-REMS' many tangible projects.

**Outcome:** An expansion of the partnership's current partner base with additional organizations that effectively work towards improving the condition of the regional environment.

### New Internet Site

**Goal:** The partnership will develop a publicly available V-REMS website to improve access to information about the Partnership and to enhance the V-REMS Partnership's ability to serve the environmental interests of organizations primarily throughout Virginia as well as across the U.S.

**Outcome:** The maintenance of an effective web-based resource promoting information exchange among partners, welcoming new participants, and featuring an information-sharing tool. An improvement in the partners' ability to match their needs with other partners' resources or solutions to those needs.



Improving the sharing of stormwater BMPs, like this rain garden at the DSCR, and developing joint projects to protect the Chesapeake Bay is a priority for V-REMS in 2007.

#### V-REMS Partnership Sponsors:

U.S. Department of Defense  
 Defense Supply Center Richmond  
 White House Council on Environmental Quality

#### For More Information:

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